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PCS TOOLKIT



INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- ✓ PCS Checklist
- ✓ PCS Budget
- ✓ Home Selection Guide
- ✓ Home Inventory
- ✓ Pet Resume & More!



Welcome to Your PCS Toolkit!

In ten years as a military spouse, my family has moved seven times and PCS'd five times. Trial and error, plenty of mistakes, and the advice of more experienced friends taught me necessary lessons about navigating a successful military move. In this PCS Toolkit, I have partnered with AHRN.com to bring you information, resources and printable worksheets to keep your move organized.

DISCOVER YOUR TOOLS

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- 4 **Document Checklist** – Keep track of documents you will need to hand-carry during your PCS.
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- 7 **Entitlements Estimate** – Moving is expensive even when you choose a government procured move. It is vital that you understand what entitlements you have access to and how to minimize out-of-pocket costs.
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A SMOOTH MOVE



Whether 2016 holds your first move or your tenth, PCSing can be incredibly stressful - changing policies, new challenges, and evolving family needs make each move unique. The AHRN.com 2016 PCS Toolkit brings together resources and information from the many different aspects of a PCS to help you prepare for your smoothest move yet!

Kristen Smith
AHRN.com Blog Manager


How To Use The PCS Toolkit

During your PCS, there will be a tremendous amount of information to keep track of: copies of orders, pack out and shipping dates, appointments, power of attorney and more.

Toolkit Organization List:

1. Three-ring binder
2. Page protectors
3. Zipper pencil case

This will keep your paperwork and receipts you will need to submit or keep for records all in one place!



Wherever you are stationed,
you can find your home on AHRN.com.

Visit AHRN.com today!

Your 2016 PCS Checklist

1 YEAR

- ___ Even before you have orders, know that a PCS could be in the cards.
- ___ Build a savings account to prepare for the out of pocket and reimbursable expenses of a PCS.
- ___ If you know your timeline, list your home for sale or rent on AHRN.com.

6 MONTHS

- ___ Orders can come down 6 months or earlier ahead of your report date. This offers plenty of time to gather information and possibly make a trip and take a look at your new installation in person.
- ___ If you know your timeline, list your home for sale or rent on AHRN.com.

90 DAYS OUT

FOR THE SERVICE MEMBER

- ___ Set up transportation counseling with your current installation transportation office or do self-counseling on move.mil.
- ___ Have a PCS-specific power of Attorney or Letter of Authority drawn up if your spouse will be handling any of the details without you present.

DECISIONS TO MAKE

- ___ Decide whether a government move (DTO), personally procured move (PPM) or partially personally procured move (partial PPM) is the best fit for your family.
- ___ Determine if you will need to ship a vehicle (this requires some prior planning!).
- ___ Determine your BAH and decide if you want to live on or off base/post.

FINANCES

- ___ Estimate your move -related expenses and create a budget.
- ___ Create a way of tracking moving related expenses (you will need to account for your expenses and have receipts for reimbursements).



TASKS

- ___ Notify your landlord that you will be moving, but leave the date open—a lot can still change, especially the timing of your PCS.
- ___ Take care of needed medical/dental appointments.
- ___ Start or update your personal property inventory.
- ___ Organize personal records and determine if any need to be replaced (you'll need birth certificates for schools).
- ___ Notify your clubs and volunteer organizations you are a part of that you will be moving.
- ___ Make sure there are no stickers left from previous moves on furniture.
- ___ Identify any repairs needed to your home before move cleaning (paint, putty holes, clean carpets).
- ___ Begin researching your new area and choose how to organize and consolidate information (a binder, a notebook, an app like Evernote).

Your 2016 PCS Checklist

60 DAYS OUT

FOR THE SERVICE MEMBER

- ___ If you are authorized to ship a vehicle (OCONUS moves), let your duty station's transportation office start the set up process. You will need to know your vehicle's estimated weight.
- ___ Attend the pre-clearing brief to get details of your installation's clearing process (some installations have a set timeline for this).

DECISIONS TO MAKE

- ___ Evaluate housing options on AHRN.com, establish your BAH and keep notes!

FINANCES

- ___ Check expiration dates on any credit/debit cards you plan to use during your move. Order new ones if necessary.



TASKS

- ___ Complete any needed auto maintenance.
- ___ Make a vet appointment for your pets. Update any needed vaccinations and make sure your pet is microchipped. Get a full copy of your pet's medical records to take with you.
- ___ Donate or sell any unwanted items.
- ___ Identify school requirements for children (if applicable).
- ___ Post home for rent or sale on AHRN.com.

Your 2016 PCS Checklist

30 DAYS OUT

FOR THE SERVICE MEMBER

- ___ Attend a Finance Brief to set up any needed PCS advances and get paperwork.
- ___ If you haven't already, attend the pre-clearing brief.
- ___ Begin out processing.
- ___ Confirm packing, pick up and delivery dates with movers/transportation office.



TASKS

- ___ Begin using the contents of your freezer and pantry.
- ___ Label items/boxes that you will need easy access to just before and after your move.
- ___ Designate a folder for important documents and put them there!
- ___ If you have your new address, forward your mail and submit a change of address.
- ___ Evaluate whether you need storage options.
- ___ Arrange for temporary lodging.
- ___ Dispose of any leftover unwanted items or items that cannot be transported.
- ___ Ensure that all insurance is up-to-date and your insurers have a forwarding address and transit contact information.
- ___ Return any borrowed items (like library books).
- ___ Record serial numbers of electronics and other valuables in personal property inventory.
- ___ Fill out IRS change of address form.
- ___ Notify utilities of your move out date and make arrangements to close out accounts.
 - ___ Electric ___ Waste Disposal ___ Water
 - ___ Telephone ___ Internet/Cable ___ Lawn Care
- ___ Cancel any subscriptions and memberships (i.e. newspaper or gym).
- ___ Settle all outstanding bills that can be paid in advance of your departure.
- ___ Get all prescriptions refilled (Tricare recommends 90 days worth).
- ___ Get paper copies of all prescriptions (medications, contacts and glasses).
- ___ Separate Pro Gear for both the service member and spouse, if applicable.

PCS Document Checklist

If you chose to have a military contracted company move your household goods, there are some things that are worth holding on to for the trip – the following important documents must be among them. It is recommended that you back up all originals with a digital copy stored on a device that you also keep with you. Documents that do not require an original signature (like your resume and household inventory) only need the digital copy.

FAMILY MEMBER FILES

- ☐ Military IDs
- ☐ Drivers Licenses
- ☐ Social Security cards
- ☐ Passports
- ☐ Birth Certificates
- ☐ Marriage Certificates
- ☐ Naturalization Certificates

VEHICLE DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Title/Lease information
- ☐ Proof of Vehicle Inspection
- ☐ Registration
- ☐ Insurance

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Personal checks (keep all of your personal checks with you and out of your household goods)
- ☐ Hard copies of bank statements
- ☐ Credit and debit cards

HOUSEHOLD

- ☐ Household inventory with supporting images and video
- ☐ Contact information for your moving company and gaining installation transportation office

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Powers of Attorney
- ☐ Wills
- ☐ Custody Agreements
- ☐ Divorce Decrees
- ☐ Adoption paperwork

PCS Document Checklist

SCHOOL/EMPLOYMENT

- ☐ Transcripts
- ☐ Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- ☐ Report cards
- ☐ Additional registration required documents
- ☐ Resume and letters of reference (if spouses or kids will be job hunting)
- ☐ Contact list for future/former schools

MEDICAL RECORDS

- ☐ Full copy of each family member's medical and dental records (and any needed x-rays)
- ☐ Vaccination records
- ☐ Any current prescriptions

JUST FOR YOUR FAMILY

- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Other: _____

Throughout your PCS, you'll refer to some phone numbers and emails consistently so it's a good idea to keep them handy. We've listed some suggestions and left room for you to fill in more! Clear and timely communication (plus double checking dates and following up) are key components of a smooth PCS.

Landlord/Housing : _____

Cable/Satellite : _____

Electric/Power Company : _____

Gas : _____

Water : _____

Trash : _____

Telephone : _____

PCM : _____

Pediatrician : _____

Lodging : _____

Schools : _____

Tricare Regional Provider : _____

Transportation (outbound) : _____

Finance Office : _____

[illegible]

Your PCS Entitlements

While out processing from your losing installation, you will be briefed on PCS entitlements and how to receive the maximum reimbursement. It is vital that you keep any documentation given and all receipts.

There are a number of different entitlements and payments you will receive during your PCS intended to cover the cost of your move. To receive your moving payments, you will need to file the proper paperwork. Using this worksheet, you can create an estimate of the amount owed to you. The regulations applied to these payments are updated constantly and there are some branch-specific regulations that apply. The percentages and formulas are updated regularly. Check with your transportation office for the most current numbers. Please get amounts specific to your situation from your installation finance brief.

HOW FAR ARE YOU GOING?

The DOD expects you to travel 350 miles each day during your PCS. This calculation is used to figure out how much of each per diem you earn.

Total miles to your next duty station _____ / 350 = _____ days of travel.

TASKS

Dislocation Allowance (click here to check chart) _____

Travel Per Diem

_____ # of service members	x	(\$129	x	_____ days of travel)	_____	+
_____ # of dependents over 12	x	(\$92.25	x	_____ days of travel)	_____	+
_____ # of dependents under 12	x	(\$61.50	x	_____ days of travel)	_____	=
Total travel per diem					_____	

MALT

If you are traveling in your own vehicle, the government will pay you \$.24/mile in reimbursement for each vehicle.

_____ # of vehicles being driven x (\$.24 x _____ total miles of travel) = _____

PPM/Partial-PPM

If you choose a Personally Procured Move or Partially Personally Procured Move, you will be paid approximately 95% of what your move would cost the government to contract out. Speak with your travel office to determine the payout for your specific move. There is a PPM specific briefing that will provide the current rates and regulations.

Your PCS Budget

ARE YOU SELLING YOUR HOME?

Pre-listing maintenance and repairs

\$

\$

Advertising and staging

\$

\$

Agent costs + commission

\$

\$

Mortgage payments until sale (after your PCS)

\$

\$

ARE YOU DRIVING TO YOUR NEXT

Prepare your vehicle!

Pre-trip tune-up and oil change

\$

\$

Weatherizing (if you are moving to a different climate)

\$

\$

DO YOU HAVE PETS?

Update vaccinations

\$

\$

Health certificate (if traveling across state lines)

\$

\$

Microchip

\$

\$

MOVE OUT PREP

Cleaning supplies or service

\$

\$

Move out repairs (paint, spackle, light bulbs, etc.)

\$

\$

Yard work: reseeding, fence repair, etc.

\$

\$

Eating out expense for once kitchen is clean/pack out days

\$

\$

Your PCS Budget

2016 PCS TOOLKIT

ON THE MOVE	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
Temporary lodging at your losing duty station	\$	\$
Hotel/lodging during your trip	\$	\$
Temporary lodging at your gaining duty station	\$	\$
Food while in transit	\$	\$
Boarding pets (does your hotel allow pets?)	\$	\$
Gas (if you are driving)	\$	\$
Trip activities and entertainment	\$	\$
AFTER YOUR ARRIVAL		
Restocking the kitchen and household items	\$	\$
Toiletries	\$	\$
PREPPING FOR SCHOOL		
School/daycare registration and tuition	\$	\$
School uniforms	\$	\$
Kids sports registration	\$	\$
Updated clothing for new climates	\$	\$
EXTRA EXPENSES		
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$

PM



Patrician Military Housing

Proudly Serving Those Who Serve

Patrician Management is a locally owned property management company that has been in business in Louisiana since 1936. We partnered with the Department of the Navy in 2001 to provide a higher quality of housing and services to our military members and their families. We proudly welcome all branches of the military to on-base housing. Proud recipient of the 2015 Crystal Award for Customer Service Excellence.



Who Can Live In Our Community?

Active Duty Military • Reservists • Retired Military • DoD Civilians • Singles • Veterans



Experience All That Our Community Has To Offer:

- Community Center
- Happy Tails Dog Park
- 24-Hour Emergency Maintenance
- Countless Monthly Resident Events
- On-Site Management Team
- Covered Playgrounds
- Community Garden
- Commissary/ Navy Exchange
- Fitness Center
- Belle Chasse Academy & CDC Daycare
- Bowling Alley



www.LiveatNAS.com • 866-677-0531

303 Russell Avenue, Belle Chasse, LA 70037

Choose The Right Home With AHRN.com

2016 PCS TOOLKIT

BUILDING A PROFILE



YOUR NEW BAH

Estimated Utilities

Target Rent

HOME STATS

Ideal Bedrooms

Ideal Bathrooms

Ideal Parking

Needed Pet Policy

Fenced Yard

☐ DPLX/Townhome
 ☐ Apartment
 ☐ Condo
 ☐ House
 ☐ Roommate

What room of the house does your family spend the most time in?

What are your favorite aspects of previous homes?

What are your least liked aspects of previous homes?

What's the maximum travel time for your ideal commute?

SCHOOLS/DAYCARE

What education options will you need?

☐ Private
 ☐ Public
 ☐ Daycare

Notes:

Choose The Right Home With AHRN.com

NEIGHBORHOOD

What makes a neighborhood feel like home for you?

- ☐ Convenient Shopping
 ☐ Quiet
 ☐ Downtown feel
 ☐ Sidewalks
 ☐ Streetlights
- ☐ Parks
 ☐ Acreage
 ☐ Military Community

NEED VS WANT

Prioritize the qualities in a home that you most need and want.

Needs

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Wants

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Choose The Right Home With AHRN.com

RESEARCH NOTES

Interesting/Recommended Neighborhoods:

Preferred Schools:

Recommended Property Managers:

Potential Homes:



Are You Ready To Buy A Home?

The decision to become a homeowner while in the military requires diligent consideration due to factors unique to military life. Home ownership as a great opportunity to get grounded and plant some roots. However, home ownership decisions must involve careful financial and lifestyle planning. You can find more home buying resources and information in the [Military Home Buying Guide](#).

6 QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Am I financially ready?

Financial readiness is one of the key factors in deciding whether it's time to buy instead renting. In assessing your finances, consider these key components:

2. Do I know my credit score?

Before you start contacting lenders for rate quotes / qualification, you should know your credit score. Credit scores range from 100-850 (850 being pristine and 100 being not fundable). But be cautious when checking... every time someone pulls your credit, it reduces your score.

3. Do I know the market where I want to buy?

Often, military members are making the decision to rent or buy from a distance, prior to moving into the area. Take into consideration average home prices, pricing trends, average days on market (especially if you are hoping to sell when you PCS), local schools and trending neighborhoods. Your best bet is to find a military-friendly realtor that is familiar with the local market and can help you navigate the special needs/circumstances of inbound or local military and their families.

4. What is my timeline?

We all know that there is very little absolute certainty for military service members. In many cases though, you should have some idea of how long you will be staying in the area. If you are PCSing for a school and can reasonably expect to PCS again within 12 to 18 months, then it might not be the right time for buying. On the other hand, if your assignment is expected to last two or more years, then it's worth considering.

5. How much house can I buy?

As a general rule of thumb, you don't want to spend more than 40% of your monthly income on housing, including mortgage, taxes, insurance, and maintenance. If these expenses are projected to be above 40%, then you may want to save up, pay down bills and work towards home ownership in the future. Be sure to consult with a mortgage lender before making the final decision. You can talk to a mortgage lender about your options without them pulling your credit or making any commitment.

6. What are my financing options?

One of the best benefits of serving in the military, but the least understood is the VA Home Loan — a mortgage loan guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs but issued by qualified lenders, like banks or mortgage companies. For active duty or veterans that qualify, the VA loan makes it easier for you to purchase or refinance a home.

How To Find A Real Estate Professional

If you are considering buying a home at your next duty station, choosing who to work with during your home search cannot be underestimated! A realtor that understands your needs and the particular challenges of military life can be a powerful ally in creating a positive home search experience. Look for a realtor who answers these questions with your specific concerns in mind: schools, proximity to military services, etc.

WHAT TO ASK

1. Ask friends who live at your desired location about a trusted real estate agent referral. Then research that person online to make sure they don't have any glaring negative reviews.
2. Through a partnership with VA Loan Reality, AHRN.com offers per-screened military friendly Realtors. Start your real estate professional search at <http://bit.ly/ahrn-findarealtor>

Notes:

My Pet Resume

Your Pet's
Picture

My Pet is _____

Type of Pet/Breed

Age

Weight

Spay/Neuter

My Pet's Story:

My pet's training history:

My back up pet care plan:

My pet has references from:

Your Home Inventory

Protecting your household goods while they are out of your possession starts long before the movers arrive to pack. Home inventories are one of the most useful and overlooked investments you can make in protecting yourself from theft and damage.

If you utilize a "military move" - with contracted packers and drivers- they will create a log of your packed belongings. However, this leaves you at the mercy of their accuracy should you need to file a claim at the end of your move. A thorough home inventory completed by you will help keep track of your belongings through the move, assess how much insurance you need, file any needed claims for damage or loss, and can provide supporting documentation when you file taxes.

CREATING A HOME INVENTORY

There are many methods available for creating a home inventory, depending on your personal preference.

Notebook or spreadsheet: Hand-made lists or spreadsheets can be listed room-by-room or grouped by category, like listing every television you own in your home, then cameras, and so on.

Picture Documentation: Photograph each item, ensuring you get images of serial numbers and showing the item is functional.

Video Documentation: With video, you can narrate and add details of each item.

Digital Inventory: There are websites and apps available online, just make sure you have a physical back up.

Not sure where to start with your Home Inventory? We have included a sample page in your toolkit - print as many copies you need if you prefer pen and paper. You can also go digital with our Google Spreadsheet version, saving to your Google Drive for from-anywhere digital access. Find more home inventory resources and tools at <http://blog.ahrn.com/protect-your-pcs-with-a-home-inventory>.

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Resources

Need more help or information? We've put together some of our favorite PCS resources!

PREPARING FOR YOUR MOVE

[5 Things You Need To Do After Getting Orders \[Video\]](#)

[Decisions: To Live On or Off Base/Post](#)

[What Is A PCS Weight Allowance?](#)

[Preparing for A New School](#)

[Military Child Education Coalition](#)

[Making The Most of AHRN.com](#)

[How To Get Your Rental Deposit Back](#)

[Shipping Your Vehicle During A CONUS PCS](#)

[Defense Travel Management Office \(up to date forms and entitlement information\)](#)

BECOMING A LANDLORD

[How To Find A Property Management Company](#)

[How To Determine Fair Market Value For Your Rental](#)

[5 Tips For Self-Managing Your Rental](#)

[5 Property Management Apps To Make Your Life Easier](#)

[How To Write A Great Property Listing](#)

[When Can I Expect To Rent My Home?](#)

FINDING YOUR NEW HOME

[Creating A Pet Resume](#)

[Roommates For Different Seasons](#)

[Housing For The Single Servicemember](#)

[Storage Solutions with Sparefoot](#)

[How To Master The Rental Walk Through](#)

[Interview Your Potential Landlord](#)

DITY MOVES

[Make The Most Of Your Partial PPM](#)

[Is A DITY Move Right For You?](#)

[5 Reasons To DITY Move](#)

[5 Tips For A Better DITY Move](#)

[Save Money By Doing a DITY with uShip](#)